



JB Pritzker, Governor
Paula A. Basta, M.Div., Director

One Natural Resources Way, Suite 100, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
Phone: 800-252-8966 • 888-206-1327 (TTY) • Fax: 217-785-4477

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Iris Schweier

773-636-8802

Iris.Schweier@Illinois.gov

Department on Aging Promotes Home and Community-Based Services During Older Americans Month

2022 Theme, Age My Way, Focuses on Aging in Place

SPRINGFIELD, III. – Highlighting the vital, positive roles older adults play in communities throughout the state and the services that support them, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) are recognizing May as Older Americans Month.

“I’ve directed my administration to use every tool of government to enhance state services and supports for all residents to live their best lives,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Senior Illinoisans deserve every dignity of their younger neighbors, and I’m proud to declare May Older Americans Month in recognition of all that our elders bring to the communities they call home.”

Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the celebration of Older Americans Month. This year’s theme, *Age My Way*, focuses on how older adults can age healthfully in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose. In recognition of the observance, IDoA is promoting home and community-based services that support independent living and address serious health risks, such as falls and social isolation.

IDoA’s largest program, the [Community Care Program \(CCP\)](#) helps older adults, who might otherwise need nursing home care, to remain in their own homes by providing in-home and community-based services. To be eligible, Illinois residents must be at least 60 years of age; U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents; have non-exempt assets of no more than \$1,700; and have an assessed need for long-term care. CCP services include in-home service, adult day service, emergency home response service, and automated medication dispenser service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department also initiated a temporary, gap-filling program to meet older adults’ urgent needs. Emergency Senior Services (ESS) funds are used for various purposes, including but not limited to increasing nutrition access, personal protective equipment, sanitation supplies, transportation, minor home modifications and repairs, and a variety of assistive devices and technology. With the ESS program set to expire in FY 2023, IDoA will be working to permanently add minor home modifications and repairs, plus assistive devices and technology, to the array of services and supports provided through the Community Care Program.

A separate COVID-era program supported through a combination of federal and state funding, [Illinois Care Connections](#), works to combat social isolation by providing technology devices such as iPads, tablets, and Wi-Fi hotspots to CCP participants. To date, more than 3,000 devices have been distributed, and the program

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The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

continues to accept referrals.

To help older adults remain involved and contribute to their communities through part-time work and volunteer opportunities, IDoA administers the [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#). This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and is designed to assist low-income adults aged 55 and older in entering or reentering the job market. Participants receive work-based job training to increase their job marketability.

In addition to offering services to older adults, IDoA and Illinois' Aging Network also support caregivers of aging family members, offering resources, respite services and counseling to stave off caregiver burnout. The state's FY 23 budget includes an increase of \$4 million to Illinois' 13 regional Area Agencies on Aging to strengthen support services for the unpaid caregiver workforce, with the goal of preventing the premature placement of older adults in long-term care facilities.

"Helping older adults maintain their independence and quality of life is at the heart of our mission at the Department on Aging," **said IDoA Director Paula Basta**. "Older Americans Month is a wonderful opportunity to draw attention to the services that are available to support both older adults and caregivers, as well as to honor and celebrate the older people who enrich our lives."

IDoA serves and advocates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. For information about the Department's programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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